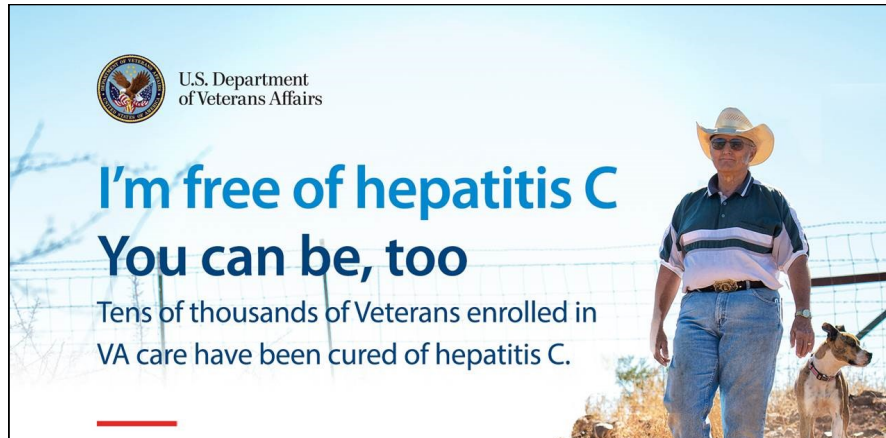


VETERANS UPDATE

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 8

AUGUST, 2019

100,000 HEP-C VETERANS CURED BY VA



As World Hepatitis Day was marked nationwide July 28, the Department of Veterans Affairs reached a significant milestone, having cured more than 100,000 Veterans of chronic hepatitis C virus infection, or HCV, establishing VA as a global leader in diagnosis and treatment.

HCV infection can lead to

advanced liver disease, liver cancer and early death. Curing HCV can prevent the development or progression of liver disease, cutting death rates by up to 50 percent.

In 2014, highly effective, less toxic oral antivirals became available. The new drugs have fewer and less severe side effects, revolutionizing HCV treatment. VA adopted use of

the new medications within days of FDA approval.

"These efforts have been nothing short of life-saving for tens of thousands of Veterans, and that's precisely why VA has made diagnosing, treating and curing hepatitis C virus infection such a priority," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 10, 6:20 p.m., Veteran suicide prevention discussion panel following a documentary film presentation. Avon Cinema, 260 Thayer Street, Providence. For more information or free tickets, call 401-273-7100 ext. 2668.

Sept. 11, 12 p.m., Suicide Prevention Walk, back patio, main hospital, 830 Chalkstone Ave. For more info, call 401-273-7100 ext. 2154.

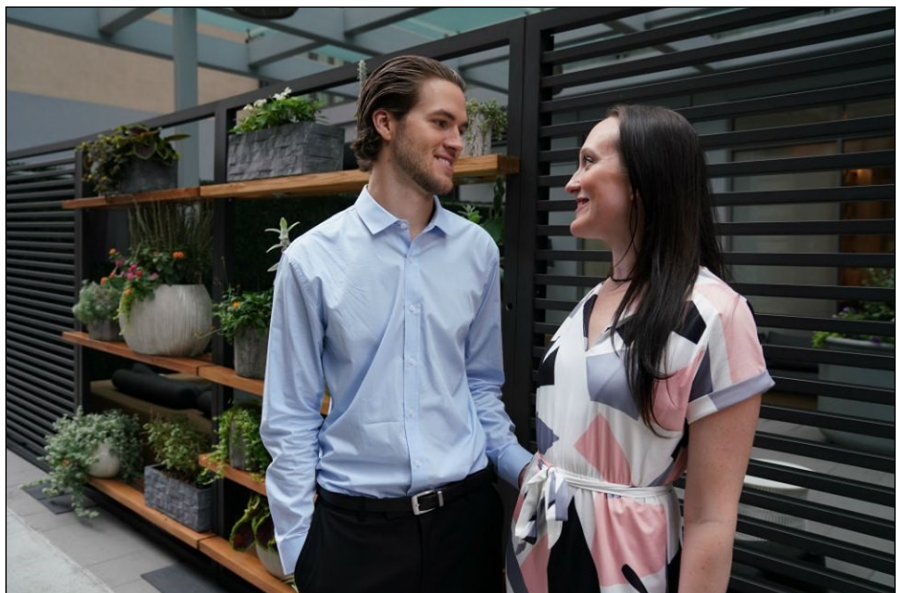
MAKING THE TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Transitioning to civilian life can be hard, but it is possible!

The Providence VAMC Transition and Care Management team can help guide you on your journey. They provide guidance and access to services for returning combat Veterans, including primary care, mental health, social work and Veterans benefits assistance.

You can contact the TCM program at 401-273-7100 ext. 6131 or erin.butler2@va.gov.

To hear other Veterans share their transition experiences, visit <https://maketheconnection.net/stories/822>.



VA NE DIRECTOR AT PVAMC TOWN HALL



Ryan Lilly, director of the VA New England Health Care System. (VA New England Health Care System photo)

As part of a visit to the Providence VA Medical Center Aug. 15, 2019, the director of the VA New England Health Care System attended the Veteran Town Hall meeting at the facility that evening.

Ryan Lilly provided an update on MISSION Act implementation and its impact on VA New England as a whole, as well as other topics of interest.

Lilly started by noting that many Veterans have expressed concerns to him about MISSION Act meaning the privatization of VA Health Care, but said that VA leadership from VA Secretary Robert Wilkie down have emphasized that is not their intent; the intent is to provide Veterans with improved access to care.

"One thing we can control at our level," Lilly said, "is the access to timely care at VA New England facilities, so that has been, and continues to be, our focus." He added that comparing timeliness of care and quality with the private sector, VA facilities perform as good or better in most cases.

Veterans wishing to compare VA facilities' performance with the private sector can do so for

themselves at the VA access and quality website by visiting <https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/>

While cautioning that it is still early to draw definitive conclusions, Lilly said that preliminary analysis of community care use since the MISSION Act launch June 6 shows more New England Veterans have been receiving care in the community — which should be expected, since more of them are now eligible — but that Veterans are also making greater use of services provided by VA.

"Our experience under the Choice Act showed that roughly half of the time, Veterans had to wait longer for an appointment in the community," Lilly added. "So I want you to know that you can still choose to get your care at VA if you find the wait is longer in the community."

Lilly then highlighted MISSION Act's new urgent care benefit, which he said helps fill a gap in care, providing a care in the community option for injuries or illnesses that shouldn't wait, but which are not life-threatening, supplementing the scheduled care and emergency services Veterans can get at VA medical facilities.

More urgent care providers in the community are being added every day, so for the most recent information on providers in their communities, Veterans can visit the VA website at https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Urgent_Care.asp.

The VA New England director concluded his remarks by noting that VA Health Care nationwide goes smoke-free for patients, visitors and contractors Oct. 1, and VA employees soon after.



Providence VA Medical Center

830 Chalkstone Ave
Providence, RI 02908
401-273-7100

Veteran's Crisis Line:
800-273-8255 press 1

Patient Call Center (PCC):
401-457-3336

Pharmacy Call Center:
866-400-1241

Office of Community Care
401-273-7100 ext. 3015

Account Balances:
401-457-3344

VA Benefits Information
800-827-1000

Website:
www.providence.va.gov

Facebook:
facebook.com/VAProvidence

Twitter:
twitter.com/VAProvidence